

THE BUCKLEY LAND GRANT

The grant for the Buckley property was made before the Revolutionary War and was signed by King George III of England. It was granted to Joshua Buckley about 1762 and was what is known as a "Tomahawk Grant" - so named because the white settlers had a treaty with the Indians that the whites would not settle in the Ohio River watershed. The pioneers persuaded the Governor of Virginia that the Greenbrier River emptied into the Atlantic Ocean.

The original plot of land was bounded as follows: Starting at a point one block north of the present Court House in Marlinton, a straight line to the top of the mountain at the Lone Tree Knob, then along the top of the mountain to encompass the watershed of Swago Creek; thence to a point at the island at the mouth of Improvement Lick Run; thence north to the mouth of "Black Stump" Hollow; thence a straight line to the mouth of Mundy Lick Run; thence to the starting point in Marlinton.

The part at Marlinton was taken from the original tract by a court order and given to the McLaughlin family.

As Joshua's family became mature each was given a tract of land. The division was as follows: Hettie married George Kee and was given that part of the farm north of the Big Rocks in the Greenbrier River and west to the top of the mountain at Lone Tree Knob. Joe Buckley married Betty Gibson and was given that part of the land west of the river, south of the Kee tract and south to Swago Creek, with the exception of the flat land just north of the mouth of Swago Creek. John Buckley married Patsy Casebolt and was given the tract south of Swago Creek and the flat land mentioned above. When his parents became old John moved to the east side of the river, built a house just north of his parents' home. At their death he inherited the land east of the river. When the McNeill family came in 1777 they were given the limestone flat land on the southwest.

The Kee farm was later divided. Polly was given the part east of Route 219 and to the river. Joshua Kee got the part east of the river. George got the part north and west of the point where the highway tops the Price Hill. Aaron got the remainder of the Kee land.

The John Buckley tract west of the river was sold to several families. The Amis family got the part north of Swago Creek. This later was sold to the Auldriges and Charley Young.

The Joe Buckley land went to the Ochletree family, then to John Gay and Joe McNeill and is now owned by Lewis Gay.

The homestead east of the river was given to Joshua Buckley. This was divided as follows: Margaret and Charles Young, Jane and Columbus Silva, Andy Rose, and Clinton Courtney.

During this generation all the tracts once owned by Joshua Buckley II were bought back with the exception of a few acres owned by the heirs of W. M. Young. Several acres have been added to the homestead; namely, the McCoy farm at the head of Williams River and 575 acres of cut-over timberland east of the farm.

Joshua Buckley II was a minister at heart rather than a farmer. With his large family and small income it became necessary to sell parts of the farm. He sold the lower part of the river bottom to George Overholt and some of the hill land to Charles Young and Clinton Courtney. The upper part of the bottom was given to daughter Jane and Columbus Silva. This left only a small section with the home. Later this was mortgaged for debt, and at the time his son John took over the management of the farm, all was gone or mortgaged for all it was worth.

John began to gather the land together again and to pay off the debts. This was during the depression of the 1880's. He worked as a carpenter, helping to build the store for Daniel McNeill. His wages were seventy-five cents a day. Later the lumber interests began to cut the timber on the Greenbrier River and float the logs to Ronceverte to the sawmill. John soon learned to guide the arks down the river and became the pilot of the arks. This was a job of considerable responsibility and paid a little better wages than the other men got. However, it could not be done during the winter months.

Several companies were buying tracts of land and timber in Pocahontas County. Many of these companies knew little or nothing of the country. John learned to estimate timber and would make estimates for a fee. This gave him a good income, and it could be done during the winter. In this way he could work almost all the year.

During this time much of the work on the farm was done by the wife and children. Since John was able to be at home at some time during each week, he could manage the farm quite well. He soon paid the mortgage on the home.

About 1897 when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad began to build the Greenbrier Division there was yet a debt of two hundred dollars, which was owed to Columbus Silva. In order to give a deed for the right-of-way for the railroad,

Joshua, then the owner, deeded eight acres of land lying between the homestead and the Overholt tract to Silva. This was known as the "Little Orchard".

In 1906 Aumiller Brothers were looking for a tract of timber to cut. They contacted John Buckley, knowing that he could estimate timber and that he had cruised the timber on his own lands as well as that on the Silva and Young (then Thomas) farms.

The Aumillers made an offer based on the estimate which had been made. That part belonging to Silva was the best grade of timber, and they offered one thousand dollars for it.

John then began to try to buy the Silva farm. They offered to sell all except the "Little Orchard" for twelve hundred dollars. The deal was made and the timber was sold, leaving a balance of two hundred dollars outstanding. By this time Jay Buckley was old enough to work on public works, and he and his father went to work and paid off the outstanding debt.

In the meantime, the Overholt farm had been bought by Charles Young and sold to James Cook. After Walter Graham married Addie Buckley, he and Jay Buckley bought the lower end of the river bottom from Cook. The "Little Orchard" remained in the hands of the Silva girls (Annd and Myrtle) until 1925 when this tract was sold to Jay Buckley for eight hundred dollars.

The tract owned by Courtneys and Youngs was acquired by William Buckley about 1933. The Andy Rose farm was bought by William and Ralph Buckley. This brought the original farm together again.

The land on the head of Williams River was bought by Jay and William Buckley as a place to graze cattle. The first place bought was the John W. Sheets farm known as the "Dutch Bottom". This was later traded for the McCoy Place".

After the timber was cut from the "Big Survey" to the east of the original farm, Jay bought five hundred seventy-five acres of this cut-over timber land. He paid about three dollars per acre for this. This completed the farm as it stands today. It consists of about fourteen hundred acres.

THE BUCKLEYS AT SWAGO

The first account we have of the Buckley family was in Ireland at the time of the "Bulldog Kings". This family was of Protestant faith. At that time the Roman Catholics were in power there, and the Buckleys, being persecuted for their faith, moved along with many others to Belgium and Holland.

When word came to them that the colony of Virginia had been established, these families became interested in coming to America. They returned to England and made arrangements to sail for the New World.

They arrived at the mouth of the James River in 1621. The early settlers at Jamestown had become discouraged and had set sail for England. The two boats met at the mouth of the river, and the newcomers persuaded the early settlers to return. In this way the Buckley family lays claim to being among the first permanent settlers of Virginia.

Very little is known of the family from then until about the time of the Revolution. It is presumed that they with others worked their way westward to new lands and better hunting grounds.

About 1760 there were three brothers of the family at Winchester, Virginia. Two of them moved northwestward to what is now Ohio. The other one came across the mountain into the Southbranch of the Potomac, then south to its head and over into the Greenbrier Valley. This was Joshua.

He came down the river to what is now Hosterman and there found a family by the name of Collins. Joshua made his home with the Collins family until 1774. In 1773 he married the daughter Hannah. To them was born a son, Joe, on February 22, 1774.

Joshua had scouted the Greenbrier River Valley for a home about 1762 and took a grant for land. After his marriage to Hannah, she wrote a deed, and it was recorded in the Court House in Staunton, Virginia, in 1774.

On March 6, 1774, Joshua, with his family, arrived at the mouth of Swago Creek. Here he had found a spot where the Indians had cleared about two acres of land and had been raising corn. He built a lean-to shed against a large white-oak tree just above the highwater mark on the east side of the river about two hundred yards south of the mouth of Swago

Creek. He had brought with him his wife and son, a horse, and provisions enough to last until a crop could be raised.

Joshua made a trip to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was there with General Washington. He was sent back to the valley as a scout for the army, and at the time of the Battle of Point Pleasant he was stationed at Gauley Bridge. If the Indians won the battle, a runner was to come to him, and he was to notify the settlers in the Greenbrier Valley to get into the fort at Lewisburg.

The white colony in Virginia had made a treaty with the Indians that they would not make settlements in the Ohio River Valley. The settlers in this section had persuaded the Governor of Virginia that the Greenbrier River flowed into the Atlantic Ocean. In this way they received their grants for land. These grants were known as "Tomahawk Grants". The grant for the Buckley lands was one of these and was signed by the King of England.

After moving to the mouth of Swago, three other children were born to Hannah and Joshua Buckley: John, Hettie, and Elizabeth.

The family cleared more of the bottom land and raised crops and livestock. Their chief source of income was from furs, for which they had a market. The family built a cabin directly opposite the mouth of the creek. When the children were grown, they married and settled nearby.

Hettie married George Kee and was given that part of the farm north of the Big Rocks in the river. Elizabeth married a Mr. McClure and moved to a farm at the end of Droop Mountain near where the railroad tunnel is now. Joe married Betty Gibson and was given the land around where Lewis Gay now lives.

John married Patsy Casebolt and lived on the west side of the river just opposite his father's home. When his father and mother became old, he moved to the east side of the river and built a house in the "Old Orchard" just north of where his father had built his cabin. John's family was born on the west side of the river, but later lived on the east side.

Joshua had given a plot of ground on the west side of the river for a church lot and a cemetery. At his death he and his wife Mary were buried there. This is the present site of Bethel Church. Their graves are just behind that structure.

Joshua Buckley II was born on the west side of the river on March 6, 1819. He farmed for a livelihood and also was the local Methodist minister. He disagreed with the leaders of the church as to its form of government and was one of the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church.

During his ministry the congregation outgrew the church his grandfather had built, and the congregation built a new church on the lot given by his grandfather. This building is Bethel and is still standing. It is now being used by the Presbyterian congregation. Joshua was the minister of Bethel as long as he was able to preach and refused to accept any compensation for his services there.

Joshua neglected his farm since he was much more interested in the work of the church, and as a result, he had difficulty supporting his large family and was forced to sell parts of the farm.

His son John took over the operation of the farm at the age of twelve. By that time the mortgage was large and the farm small. However, John undertook the support of the family and the repossession of the farm.

Joshua Buckley II married Lucy Adkison on December 8, 1845. To this union were born the following children: Mary Ellen, Ruth Eliza, Elizabeth Susan Frances, Ureca Jane, Sabina Laishley, Margaret Catherine, Nancy Alcinda Blake, John Barnet, Addie Lida Lorn, and Martha Irene.

Joe Buckley married Betty Gibson. They had no children, but raised a girl who later married Andrew Young. This girl was the sister of Betty Buckley. Andrew Young was the father of Charles Young who married Margaret Buckley.

Joe Buckley and his brother John were buried at the Buckley-Cloonan graveyard near where Joe lived.

John Barnet Buckley married Elizabeth Jane McNeill, the daughter of Jonathan and Angeline Adkison McNeill, on May 16, 1883. To this union were born the following children: Jay, Viola Winifred, Joshua Enoch, William McNeill, Addie May, and Ralph Barnette.

John Barnet continued to operate the home farm, and with the help of the children gradually bought back all of the original farm which is situated east of the river.

At John Barnet's death the farm was taken over by William, who was living at home at that time.